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ABSTRACT

While much attention has been given to the language problems of newly developing nations and to the various phases of planned language development such as graphization, standardization and modernization, not enough attention has been given to language planning that would serve the needs of minority groups in nations such as Australia where the national language, English, is a well-developed one. This paper looks at two major language planning programs in Australia: Migrant (Language) Education, or ME, and Aboriginal Bilingual Education, or ABE. The programs are compared to: (1) highlight the increasing dependence of planning authorities on Australian linguistics, (2) pinpoint matters requiring consideration in the early stages of the ABE program, and (3) indicate new directions for ME. The paper includes two tables which outline the programs and an appendix which summarizes points of comparison in terms of: policy goals; implementers; target population; specific aims, such as languages to be taught; sources of concepts, methods, and language materials; the programs in terms of teacher training, material preparation, administration, and language development; problems encountered; products such as teaching materials and linguistic descriptions; and by-products such as increased linguistic awareness, models for language education, changes in research trends, and an increased demand for training in linguistics. (CLK)

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7. ISSUES FOR LANGUAGE PLANNING IN AUSTRALIA

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INTRODUCTION

The field of language problems and language planning is currently emerging as a most vigorous branch of sociolinguistics. The body of concepts advanced on the subject in recent years is expected soon to take the shape of a comprehensive theory.[1] To hasten this trend, there is a growing need for comparative data, representing a wide spectrum of language problems and their treatment.

Most attention, so far, has been focussed on the language problems of newly developing nations, where policy decisions on the choice of national languages and the planned manipulation of changes in such languages are problems as important as any other matter requiring planning at a national level. The various phases of planned language development, e.g. graphization, standardization and modernization, have been examined in relation to a considerable number of languages. By comparison, little attention has been given to language planning serving the needs of minority groups in nations where the national language is a well-developed one. Language planning in Australia falls in this category.

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[1] See Rubin, J. and B.H. Jernudd, (eds.) 1971. Can Language Be Planned? The University Press of Hawaii.

This paper looks at the two major programmes of language planning in which Australia has so far been engaged, viz. Migrant (Language) Education (ME) and Aboriginal Bilingual Education (ABE).

One scheme (ME) has been in operation for over a quarter of a century, while the other (ABE) is about to be launched. Drawing up a comparison between them at this stage could be of interest for three reasons: (1) to highlight the increasing dependence of planning authorities on Australian linguistics, (2) to pinpoint matters which require careful consideration in the early stages of the ABE programme and (3) to indicate some new directions in which ME may well develop in the future.

Tables 1 and 2 represent an outline of ME and a projection of ABE respectively. The Appendix is the summary of the points which emerge from a comparison of the two Tables.

TABLE 1

MIGRANT (LANGUAGE) EDUCATION OUTLINE:

Date of Launching: 1947

Linguistic 'climate' at start of programme:

Overseas

Structuralism, post-war systematization of U.S. Forces language courses method, early developments in TEFL.

1. POLICY GOAL: Migrant 'assimilation' (integration).

2. PLANNERS: Dept. of Immigration, Commonwealth Office of Education

3. IMPLEMENTERS: Commonwealth Office of Education, subsequently Commonwealth Dept. of Education and Science (materials), State Dept/s of Education (administration), Australian Broadcasting Commission (production)

4. TARGET POPULATION: Non-English-speaking adult migrants

5. SPECIFIC AIMS: Teach informal, but standard oral English for every day communication in Australia. (Note: single language to speakers of n number of languages).

Abbreviations: TEFL = Teaching English as a Foreign Language

AE = Australian English

1947-1973

In Australia

No University Departments of Linguistics, no experience in TEFL, no professional organization of linguists, little work on AE.

6. SOURCES:
(of concepts, method and language materials):
Overseas: American Applied Linguistics (Fries, Lado), British Council and other British publications on TEFL.
Australian: No prior models for TEFL.

7. PROGRAMME:
i Write teaching materials
ii Train teachers in TEFL
iii Administer courses
- in Europe
- on shipboard
- in reception centres
- in 'continuation' classes
- by correspondence
- by radio

8. PROBLEMS:
Developing methods for teaching linguistically, educationally, culturally disparate groups.
Note: no problem of 'phasing', timing, co-ordination with other language programmes

9. PRODUCTS
Development of Australian 'situational method' of language teaching, manifested in:
i Textbooks
ii Correspondence lessons*
iii Radio lessons
iv Linguistic material for teachers ("English a New Language" bulletin).

10. BY-PRODUCTS:
(direct and indirect consequences of programme):

Promotion of interest in TEFL and AE

Application of 'situational' method to
- teaching English in Australian Territories,
- teaching French and other languages,
- teaching English to migrant and Aboriginal children, to Asian students,
- arousing overseas interest in Australian applied linguistics.

* since 1964 correspondence and radio instruction has been combined.

TABLE 2 ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION - (PROJECTION:

Date of Launching: 1973

Linguistic 'climate' at start of programme: World-wide (including Australia) transformational-generative and tagmemic frameworks of description. Interest in sociolinguistics.

1. POLICY GOAL
Educational, cultural and social development of Aborigines

2. PLANNERS:-
Dept. of Aboriginal Affairs, C'wealth Dept. of Education, State Depts. of Education.

3. IMPLEMENTERS:
C'wealth Dept. of Education (materials & admin.), State Depts of Education (materials & admin.), Teachers colleges (training), Universities and other research institutions (training and research)

4. TARGET POPULATION:
Aboriginal primary school children.

5. SPECIFIC AIMS:
i to provide bilingual education where required and possible,
ii to prepare for higher education in English

Note: teaching in many languages as mother tongues - English to all. Literacy in vernacular first.

6. SOURCES:
(of concepts, method and language materials):
Overseas: studies in bilingual education.
Australian: Descriptive studies of Aboriginal languages, of Aboriginal English, literacy materials, TEFL materials, studies in AE, language lab. courses in Aboriginal languages.

7. PROGRAMME:
i Write (utilize) literacy materials in large number of languages.
ii Write further materials in ESL
iii Train teachers in Applied Linguistics
iv Train speakers of vernacular as teachers
v Promote research in language problems
vi Develop Aboriginal languages for education
vii Administer bilingual education.

8. PROBLEMS:
Choice of language, timing, phasing, co-ordinating vernacular & English, developing languages, integrating work of mixed teaching staff, socio-cultural implications.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

1973 -)*

Australia
accumulation of descriptions of Aboriginal languages under auspices of AIAS and SIL. Studies in AE. Several Uni. departments of Linguistics, LSA since 1966. TEFL well established.

9. PRODUCTS:
Development of bilingual method through:

i Readers in Aboriginal languages,
ii Special readers in ESL,
iii Materials for teacher training, on Aboriginal languages and applied linguistics,
iv Linguistic descriptions, where not already existing, of Aboriginal languages and of Aboriginal English.

10. BY-PRODUCTS:
(direct and indirect consequences of programme)

Linguistic exposure of teachers to non-Indo-European languages (increased linguistic awareness)

Models for language education of other bilingual groups (migrant children, Aboriginal adults)

Changes in research trends (more emphasis on 'living' languages)

Promoting a better general understanding of bilingualism and second language learning

Increased demand for training in Linguistics

* this projection is based on a programme recommended in the report, Bilingual Education in Schools in Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory, Department of Education, Canberra 1973.

ABBREVIATIONS:

AIAS = Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
SIL = Summer Institute of Linguistics
AE = Australian English
LSA = Linguistic Society of Australia
TEFL = Teaching English as a Foreign Language
ESL = English as a Second Language

APPENDIX

POINTS OF COMPARISON

Box 1. Differences in goal: goal for ABE involves preservation of mother tongue and of speakers' culture.

Box 3. While universities, teachers colleges and some other organizations have played an important role in recent years in developing TEFL, ME did not originally and primarily lean on Australian linguistic field research.

Box 4. Two points of difference: (1) ME primarily oriented toward adults, ABE primarily oriented toward children, to achieve policy goals relevant to both adult and child population. English for migrant children - a recent and secondary development. ABE has to fit into general educational framework from its inception. (2) Target population for ABE a given entity, available to research. ME, particularly in early stages, based on guesses at target population. Better evaluation possibilities for ABE.

Box 5. In ME a single language (English) taught predominantly orally with no examination targets. In ABE several languages taught, at least two for each school, with emphasis on reading-writing in vernacular, and on oral skills in English in first two years, after which English literacy programme begins. Each language taught by native speaker only.

Box 6. Sources for ME were almost entirely overseas ones. For ABE a great many Australian sources available and more required. Note importance of prior language policies of non-government organizations (AIAS and SIL), each pursuing goals which partially overlap with goal of ABE. ME products themselves a source for ABE.

Box 7. (i) Writing teaching materials for ABE requires depth knowledge of the Aboriginal language as well as training in theoretical and applied linguistics. Anthropologist also to be consulted.
(ii) ESL materials to be specially co-ordinated with vernacular materials.
(iii) Teachers at an Aboriginal school have to have a broader spectrum of linguistic knowledge than is required by TEFL.
(iv) The Aboriginal teachers need to have an insight into the English part of the programme.
(v) Research on language problems shared by all speakers of Aboriginal languages and on those specific to speakers of particular languages needed. Also, on the problems of the child whose mother tongue is Aboriginal English.
(vi) This is a 'mini-programme' in language development involving graphization, internal and external standardization and modernization.

Box 8. Choice of language, timing, co-ordination - problems unique for ABE. On the other hand, ABE target populations more homogeneous and ESL materials can be more accurately directed at specific interference phenomena.

Box 9. Projected products of ABE considerably more diverse than those of ME.

Box 10. By-products: ABE likely to broaden and enhance beneficial effects of a quarter-century of ME.

GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF AUSTRALIAN LINGUISTS IN ABE

ABE relies on Australian linguistic work for (1) description of Aboriginal languages and of Aboriginal English, (2) developing languages for education, (3) preparing literacy materials (4) training teachers and preparing training materials (5) research on language problems.

SUMMARY OF MATTERS REQUIRING EARLY ATTENTION IN ABE

(1) Development of Aboriginal languages as languages of education. The matter of 'translatability' - the child has to be able to speak about a topic in either language. Further stages of education in the vernacular. Developing tests in the vernacular.

(2) Careful integration of two language programmes - Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teaching staff to have insight into each others' work.

(3) Teaching 'standard' Australian English as a second language to children who speak Aboriginal English. This problem has been largely overlooked in recommendations so far. In some Aboriginal communities the children are monolingual in Aboriginal English.

(4) The preparation of materials for teachers' colleges in Aboriginal linguistics - a matter of some urgency. Present literature far too academically oriented.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR ME?

(1) Increased emphasis on migrant children's language problems,

(2) greater utilization of bilingual teachers in schools,

(3) more attention to migrant children's linguistic and cultural heritage,

(4) promotion of research into socio-cultural aspects of migrant children's language problems.

COMBINED TEACHERS' COLLEGE COURSES FOR BOTH ME AND ABE?

Specially designed courses in Applied Linguistics containing sections on Aboriginal Languages, the main Migrant Languages, English as a Second Language, Australian English and Child Language Acquisition in addition to General Introduction to Linguistics could produce teachers better equipped to understand any bilingual child's learning problems in an Australian school. General training a saving on resources (training not wasted through teacher mobility).